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ALBANY STRATTON VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

ALBANY, NEW YORK

Registered Nurse Transition to Practice (RN TTP) Program Employee Handbook

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Welcome from the RN TTP Program Coordinator

We are delighted that you have chosen the Albany-Stratton VAMC Registered Nurse Transition to Practice (RN TTP) Program to begin your transition into professional nursing practice. It is our desire to provide you with a robust curriculum of courses, one-to-one precepted orientation and clinical support, and meaningful mentoring to guide you as you begin your journey in professional nursing. This handbook is intended as a roadmap and resource for you to use throughout your RN TTP Program year. Please keep it in a safe location and bring it to your assigned workplace each day so that you can track your learning and create daily, weekly, and monthly goals.

Rest assured that it was not an easy decision to make selections for our highly competitive Transition to Practice Program. It has been our intent to select the most highly qualified nursing graduates to join our organization in caring for our nation's military veterans. We present an opportunity to join our proud tradition in providing excellent nursing care for the uniformed men and women who have served our country on and off the battlefield in defending our security and freedom. You will discover the pride that our nurses take in fulfilling the mission of caring for our nation's heroes.

The learning activities are designed to help you in developing the essential competencies for a new graduate nurse. We use the Commission on Collegiate of Nursing Education (CCNE) Standards for Accreditation of Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs as a guide for developing the curriculum, and we do measure the outcomes of our programs based upon these standards. You will learn more about these standards throughout the program. If you should have any questions about the curriculum or its delivery, you are always welcome to ask questions.

Welcome to the Albany-Stratton VAMC,

Catherine Lester, RN, MSN, CNEcl
Registered Nurse Transition to Practice (RNTTP) Program Coordinator

Mission

The mission of the Registered Nurse Transition to Practice (RN TTP) Program is to bridge nursing academic education and professional nursing practice. It is designed to support graduate registered nurses as they transition from an entry-level, advanced beginner nurse to a competent professional nurse. The overarching goal is safe, high-quality care for Veterans. The mission serves to provide a program which will further develop effective decision-making skills related to clinical judgment and performance, strategies to incorporate research-based and other evidence into practice, clinical leadership skills at the point of patient care; and to formulate an individual career plan that promotes a life-long commitment to professional nursing.

Purpose

The purpose of the RN TTP Program is to bridge education and professional nursing practice, building on essentials learned in academic educational programs to develop a competent professional nursing practice, and to increase nurse recruitment and retention.

Our Values

The core values of nurses and trainees who represent the VA are the same as those expected for all employees throughout the VA system. We ask that you make a commitment to uphold these values, and to strive to exhibit them in the way you treat our veterans, and treat each other:

Integrity -- Commitment – Advocacy -- Respect -- Excellence



VA Core Values – Who We Are

Because I CARE, I will ...

INTTEGRITY

... Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

COMMITMENT

... Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

ADVOCACY

... Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

RESPECT

... Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

EXCELLENCE

... Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

“I CARE” is more than just words. It is a personal commitment to act.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the Albany-Stratton VAMC RN TTP Program is to pursue all goals and objectives employing a paradigm of caring and respect. Caring and respect for each RN TTP, for every colleague and co-worker, and for every client and their family members. This philosophy compels developers and instructors of the RN TTP program to look at every activity of the program through lenses colored by caring and respectful attitudes. This philosophy fosters the notion that the professional nurse learns to care for self to best deliver caring for others. The transitional first year of nursing practice is an evolutionary pathway that should prepare the RN TTP for life-long learning and develop a passion for respecting and caring for America's military Veterans.

Respect and honor for the sacrifice of America's heroes are essential characteristics of the VA nurse. While caring for the physical body, the VA nurse incorporates an understanding of the social, psychological, and economic realities that influence the delivery of care to the military veteran. Creativity in problem-solving is encouraged, and scientific exploration for evidence to support practice is expected.

The conceptual framework for the RN TTP Program curriculum structure and instructional delivery is Benner's Novice to Expert theory that hypothesizes, "Expert nurses develop skills and understanding of patient care over time through a sound educational base as well as a multitude of experiences" (Benner, 1984). From the point of hire, and progressing through a full year of supported transition, RN TTPs are guided by expert nurses.

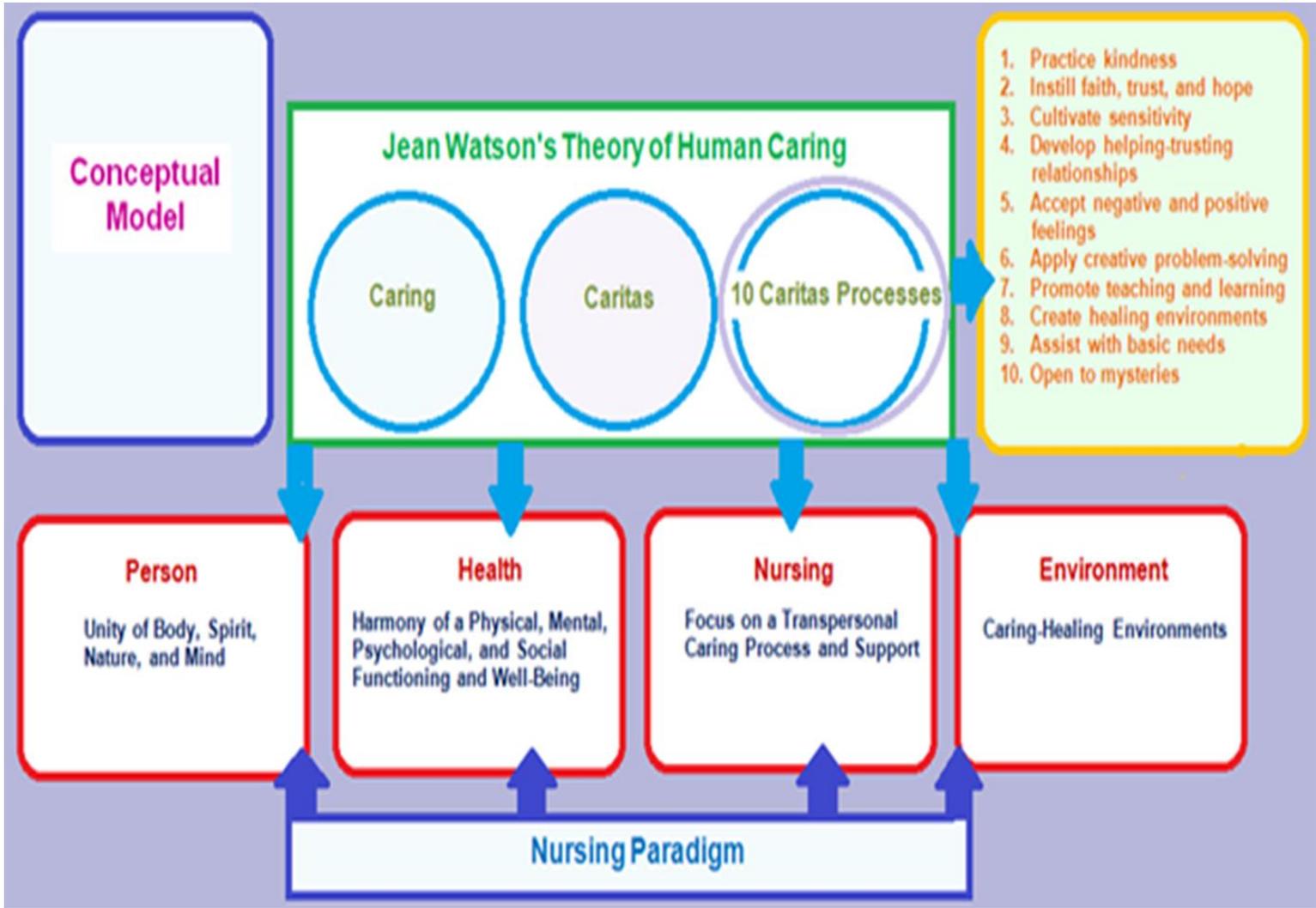
The program is centered on leadership, patient outcomes, and the developing of the professional registered nurse role. RN TTPs participate in structured classes, clinical experiences to support skill development, and projects supporting the development of patient teaching tools, and evidence-based practice. The RN TTP is provided with a rich curriculum of classes to facilitate the development of skills in caring for the unique population of the American military veteran, across the lifespan, while acknowledging diverse cultural backgrounds characteristic of this population.

Theoretical Framework

Nursing Service concurs and supports the VA vision to be a patient-centered integrated health care organization for veterans. The VA defines this emerging strategy by providing care that is both safe and effective and is delivered in the time, place, and manner that the patient prefers.

Our nursing practice in the RN TTP Program is guided by Jean Watson's Philosophy and Science of Caring. Watson states that caring can be demonstrated and practiced. Her theory is based on the concept that caring is central to nursing and promotes health. Watson's core concepts define persons as human beings and each person is to be valued, cared for, respected, nurtured, understood, and assisted. Health is defined as complete mental and social well-being, as well as physical functioning. Nursing is concerned with promoting and restoring health and preventing illness. Nursing is delivered in a caring environment for both patients and staff. The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics forms the foundation for the professional nurse.

Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring



“Jean Watson’s Philosophy and Science of Caring addresses how nurses express care to their patients. Caring is central to nursing practice and promotes health better than a simple medical cure. She believes that a holistic approach to health care is central to the practice of caring in nursing” (Retrieved from <https://nursing-theory.org/nursing-theorists/Jean-Watson.php?msclid=e1c822b7a63011ecb63288330723d3a9>).

2022-2023 RN TTP Program Fact Sheet

The Albany-Stratton VAMC RN TTP Program is designed for the new graduate nurse who has completed an entry level nursing degree. The site of the program is the Albany-Stratton VAMC in Albany, New York. New Graduate nurses with less than 1 year's previous experience as a registered nurse are eligible to apply. The nursing degree must be conferred within one year prior to start date for the program. The program adheres to accreditation standards established by the CCNE.

The TTP Program was developed to support the new nursing graduate during the first year of practice in an acute care setting. The RN TTP will participate in a structured clinical nursing program under the guidance of a qualified preceptor. The program is 12 months in length. Didactic classroom lectures and experiential learning activities are scheduled during the year to facilitate transition and achieve competency in key knowledge, skills, and responsibilities of a registered nurse. RN TTPs are guided through the completion of an evidence-based practice project or process improvement project, utilizing critical thinking and professional presentation skills.

The program design and content are guided by:

- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education's (CCNE) *Standards for Accreditation of Entry to Practice Nurse Residency Programs* (CCNE, Amended 2021)
- Patricia Benner's theory of "Novice to Expert" (1984)

RN TTPs are required to:

- Attend classes and complete all activities as assigned
- Complete assignments within the required timeframe
- Be available to work as scheduled on assigned units
Shifts may be 12 hours, 8 hours, or a combination of both
- Program Orientation and scheduled learning activities are scheduled during regular daytime business hours. Clinical nursing experiences occur during the scheduled work shifts of the unit preceptors, which is primarily day shift, and includes weekends.
- Must be able to start full time once onboarded.

Participants who successfully complete the program requirements will be presented with a certificate of completion at our annual graduation celebration.

For information on how to apply, contact:
Catherine Lester, RN, MSN, CNEcl
518-776-8045 (catherine.lester@va.gov)

Expectations for the RN TTP

We have several expectations of you as a RN TTP Program participant:

1. Ask for feedback on your progress from your Preceptor, Educator, and Nurse Manager.
2. Communicate any issues, concerns and/or feedback regarding your experience to the Program Director/and or Program Coordinator, the unit Educator, and/or the Nurse Manager of your unit.
3. **Complete the demographic data survey at month 1, the Casey-Fink Survey at required intervals, the resident competency self-assessment at month 1, as well as the end of program evaluation (EPE) on the Office of Nursing Services (ONS) Registered Nurse Transition to Practice SharePoint site.**
4. Complete all surveys and evaluations requested throughout the program year by the due dates indicated.
5. Attend all scheduled classes and assigned learning experiences. Annual leave will not be approved for scheduled class dates and learning experiences.
6. Attend any planned/scheduled meetings with your preceptor, clinical nurse manager, program director and/or coordinator, preceptor, or mentor.

We, in turn, will provide you with the following opportunities:

1. Program activities to enhance your learning regarding patient care and the VHA system.
2. Scheduled learning sessions tailored to the needs of the new graduate professional registered nurse.
3. Opportunity to provide feedback to the program director/and or the program coordinator.
4. A comprehensive orientation process lasting one year.

Resources available to you throughout the year:

Patricia F. Muster MSN, RN, NPD-BC Designated Learning Officer 518-626-5544
Catherine Lester, RN, MSN, CNEcl RN TTP Program Coordinator 518-776-8045
A qualified preceptor in the assigned clinical practice area throughout the year
A mentor (Educator Specialist)
Other nursing leaders in the assigned clinical practice area

Preceptor Expectations

To the RN TTP Preceptor:

Welcome to the RN TTP Program. This is a unique opportunity for you to assist new graduate nurses in developing their competencies and acclimating to our VHA environment. Our mutual goal is to assist the program participants in successfully completing the transition from the nursing student role to a fully functioning member of the healthcare team.

We have several expectations of you as a RN TTP Preceptor:

1. Be available to work with the RN TTP throughout the program year.
2. Validating competencies necessary to function in the RN role in the assigned work environment. This may include sharing your nursing knowledge, facilitating search of VHA policies, accessing learning resources, making introductions to interdisciplinary team members, and more.
3. Provide the new nurse with feedback related to their developing practice to support ongoing professional development.
4. Stimulate critical thinking practices to enhance clinical decision-making.
5. **Communicate all feedback regarding the new nurse's professional development to the RN TTP Program Director/and/or Program Coordinator, the Unit Educator, and/or the Nurse Manager of your unit in a timely manner.**
6. Complete the resident competency assessment at the required intervals: 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months on the Office of Nursing Services (ONS) Registered Nurse Transition to Practice SharePoint site.
7. Complete all program surveys as assigned to support program evaluation. We value your contributions to ongoing program development.
8. Use the RN TTP Program Weekly Progress Assessment tool in your encounters with your RN TTP.

We, in turn, will provide you with the following opportunities:

1. Preceptor training will be provided. This will be either in a face-to-face training or asynchronous online training via Elsevier Clinical Skills. If through Elsevier Clinical Skills, the preceptor must complete at a minimum the Mosby's Preceptor 3.0 Foundation training.
2. Experience in precepting and supporting new nurses in transition from Advanced Beginner to Competent nurse (see Patricia Benner's model).
3. Precepting activity that can be included for your annual proficiency.
4. The opportunity to shape the nursing workforce of the future.

Coaching the RN TTP with the CARE to GROW Model

We prepare our preceptors with the tools necessary to use the CARE to GROW model for any coaching activities:

Connect: Find common ground for creating an ongoing teaching-learning experience. Develop acquaintanceship to the level of mutual comfort.

Appreciate: Acknowledge the contributions they are making to the care of the Veteran patient. Give credit for effective clinical decision-making and accurate critical thinking.

Respond: Provide answers or resources for answers to questions. Provide feedback (positive and constructive). Accept as a colleague.

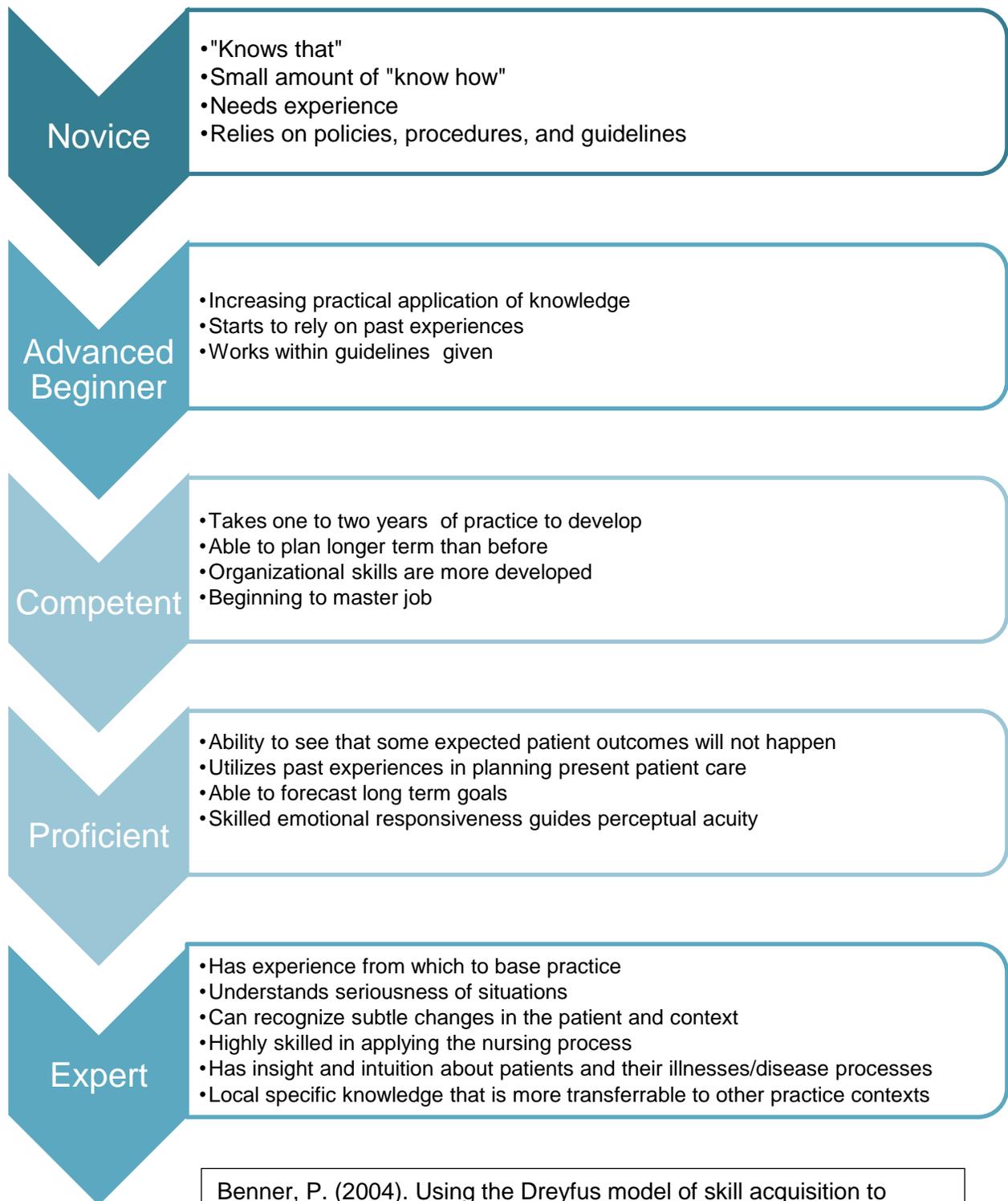
Empower: Encourage application of knowledge and experience to develop creative solutions. Encourage independence when appropriate. Ensure accessibility of resources.

Goals: Clarify the goals for learning, goals for patient care, and goals for organizational membership

Realities: What is happening right now? Is there a gap between current reality and the desired goal? How much time do I have to complete? What resources are available?

Options: What actions can be taken to achieve the planned goals?

What's next? What actions will be selected to get back on track to goal achievement?



Benner, P. (2004). Using the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition to describe and interpret skill acquisition and clinical judgment in nursing practice and education. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 24*

Planning and Goal Setting

Plan each day together with your preceptor at the beginning of the shift.

Please use the SBAR Report Tool to organize information about your patients. This will help you visualize a multi-patient assignment and keep you organized for bedside hand-off reports.

Be prepared to share with your preceptor:

1. What are your strengths? What are your needs for development?
2. What have you not completed before?
3. What makes you uncomfortable?

Ask: What are the assignment priorities for this hour? For this shift? For this week/month?

Use post-care consultation time to discuss:

Who was seen?

What was accomplished?

How did the new nurse perceive events?

What worked well? What did not work well?

Prior to care: Identify the priority nursing diagnoses. Anticipate your patients' needs through purposeful rounding.

Organize your thinking by asking questions throughout the shift to check your understanding of priorities.

Engage in discussions about the nurse's role in patient care; role as a unit team member; role as a member of the healthcare team.

Engage in discussions about professional values; dilemmas; clinical decision-making.

Learn about the roles of other interdisciplinary team members that you meet during the shift and understand the interconnectedness of those roles with nursing roles. Clarify misperceptions.

Discover constructive ways of fixing errors and building good relationships.

Include break time in your daily work plan. ☺

Focus Your Flame

An editorial in *Bold Voices* (2015), a publication of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, urges acute care and critical care nurses to “focus the flame”. This is a call to action to inspire nurses to be the change agents who will serve their profession with **Fearlessness, Inquiry, Resilience, and Engagement**. As a new graduate nurse, you can focus your flame, using “asset thinking” (Cramer & Wasiak, 2006).

Make the choice, each day, to engage in actions that will support a healthy work environment for all. Choose “asset-based thinking”:

Deficit-Based Thinking	Asset-Based Thinking
Not this again... Watch out!	At least I know how to deal with this Heads up!
Why didn't you... That won't work!	What was in your way? What could work?
Oh no! Not again... I'll never make it...	Things could be better, but I've seen this before.
That's just the way it is... That's impossible...	Put one foot in front of the other and move. Whatever it is...I'll work with it.
It's not good enough... S/He's out of his mind!	What is possible? Forget perfection.
I'll never get this done! This sucks!	What makes him tick? This will take longer than I expected.
What's the matter with me? How could you let that happen?	I'm disappointed. What am I learning?
Once again, you've fallen short! Get out of my way!	How could you have prevented this? Step back up to the plate.
If only... They just don't get it.	Here I come. Hindsight is 20-20.
How did I miss that? Whose fault is that?	They disagree. I missed that.
Why didn't I do this or that? I can't	What's done is done. Move on! What can I do better next time?
That'll never change.	I will. How can I get around this? [does not mean a work-around!]

American Association of Critical Care Nurses (2015). Another angle. *Bold Voices*, 7 (6), p. 3.

Cramer, K. & Wasiak, H. (2006). *Change the way you see everything*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press.

Classroom Etiquette

1. **Be on time.** Classroom offerings begin promptly at 0800 on class days unless prior notification is given of a time change. Breaks are provided. Please ensure you are in your seat at the end of the break time allotted.
2. **Sign the attendance roster** for each class on arrival to the classroom.
3. Always **keep your cell phones on silence.** Sending and receiving text messages, playing games, and surfing the internet during a presentation is unprofessional and disrupts the classroom. If you must take a phone call during class, quietly stand up and leave the room to take your call in the hallway and notify the faculty prior to the start of class if there is a situation that may necessitate taking a phone call during class.
4. Complete any assignments that meant to be completed prior to the class, prior to arriving that morning. All **assignments must be completed by the due date** given.
5. Classroom dress code: Wear your clinical attire in case you are needed to return to your nursing unit for patient care. **Bring a sweater/light jacket for your comfort, as we do not have control of the thermostat in any of the classrooms.**
6. **Be fully engaged in your learning.** Participation in classroom discussions helps you to learn professional ways of responding to others who have the same or different points of view. In the classroom, all views may be expressed openly. We are making a significant investment in your ongoing professional development.
7. **Show respect to your colleagues** in the classroom. Sidebar conversations are disrespectful to your colleagues.
8. Program announcements are most easily conveyed through VA e-mail or via Microsoft Teams on the Registered Nurse Transition to Practice Program Channel. Please **check your Outlook e-mail daily and Microsoft Teams** for communication.
9. Food and beverages may be brought to the classroom. However, you must **clean up after yourself**, as others may need to use the classroom after us.
10. **Do not plan annual leave when learning experiences are scheduled.**

Your attendance is mandatory for all classes to complete the program. If there is an emergency, please notify the Program Coordinator at: 518-776-8045 and your nurse manager as soon as possible.

11. If you are too ill to attend class, you must notify your nursing leadership to report the illness AND contact nursing education to notify the Program Coordinator that you are too ill to attend class (**prior to the start of the class**). In case of an excused illness, an alternative assignment may be possible to help you achieve the learning objectives.
12. Exercise your right to voice any issues or concerns about the program to the Program Coordinator or to the Direct Learning Officer.

Program Goals

1. Increased confidence in providing safe and effective nursing care.

- Mean scores for the resident competency assessment for each of the domains of practice will increase from 1 month to 12 months.

2. Enhanced utilization of scientific evidence to support nursing practice.

- Completion of an evidence-based practice project and dissemination of findings through formal presentation within Albany-Stratton VAMC.

3. Increased retention of newly hired graduate nurses in the VA workforce.

- 80% of RN TTPs will complete the RN TTP Program and 80% of RN TTPs will be employed within the VHS 1 year after program completion.

4. Development of a professional nursing portfolio.

- 100% of RN TTPs will develop a professional portfolio

2022-2023 Class Dates

We have a robust curriculum of didactic and experiential learning activities scheduled for you throughout the year. There is an 8-hour learning session in room C-614-1 once per month (any location changes will be announced). RN TTPs are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities. Please refer to the calendar of classes, which is provided as a supplement to this handbook which will be shared with you and other key stakeholders.

Any changes to the calendar will be announced through VA Outlook e-mail.



Holidays 2022 – 2023

Monday, October 10, 2022	Monday, January 2, 2023	Monday, June 19, 2023
Friday, November 11, 2022	Monday, January 16, 2023	Tuesday, July 4, 2023
Thursday, November 24, 2022	Monday, February 20, 2023	Monday, September 4, 2023
Monday, December 26, 2022	Monday, May 29, 2023	Monday, October 9, 2023

If your preceptor is scheduled to work the holiday, you will work the holiday as well unless you have requested and are approved for leave.

Scheduling

Your first four weeks have already been scheduled. You will be provided with instructions on how to create a schedule and will then be expected to submit your schedule for approval to the Program Coordinator, clinical NM and ANM, and preceptor for 6 weeks at a time or 3 pay periods.

You are approved to work 80 hours per pay period and will mirror your preceptor's schedule until you are independent when you will be placed on your work schedule by the NM or ANM of your home unit. You will not work overtime until you are able to work independently. You are expected to follow your preceptor's schedule. This will include weekend shifts, holiday, and night shifts. Once you have met with your preceptor and can see the schedule pattern that s/he usually works, you will have a better idea for planning around your work schedule. You are responsible for submitting your schedule to Catherine Lester RN TTP Program Coordinator for **six weeks at a time**.

Schedules are created in two-week increments, starting on a Sunday, ending on a Saturday. Within the two-week schedule, you must have a total of 80 hours. The 80 hours may be comprised of clinical work with your preceptor, classroom learning activities, experiential learning activities, progress review meetings, annual leave, and sick leave. For approved absences due to medical issues, your accrued sick leave may be used to fill the 80 hours. Annual leave must be approved in advance to be applied to your pay.

You will receive a template electronically in the format that we would like to receive your schedule. Save the template, and just change the dates each pay period to create your schedule. Remember that you are expected to attend all classes listed on the previous page, as well as any other mandatory learning experiences.

Example Schedule Template

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 1	7/3/22 Off	7/4/22 HE	7/5/22 0730- 1600	7/6/22 0730- 1600	7/7/22 0730- 1600	7/8/22 0730- 1600	7/9/22 Off
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 2	7/10/22 Off	7/11/22 0730- 1600	7/12/22 0730- 1600	7/13/22 0730- 1600	7/14/22 0730- 1600	7/15/22 0730- 1600	7/16/22 Off
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 3	7/17/22	7/18/22	7/19/22	7/20/22	7/21/22	7/22/22	7/23/22

	Off	0730-1600	0730-1600	0730-1600	0730-1600	0730-1600	Off
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 4	7/24/22 Off	7/25/22 0730-1600	7/26/22 0730-1600	7/27/22 0730-1600	7/28/22 0730-1600	7/29/22 0730-1600	7/30/22 Off
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 5	7/31/22 Off	8/1/22 0730-1600	8/2/22 0730-1600	8/3/22 0730-1600	8/4/22 0730-1600	8/5/22 0730-1600	8/6/22 Off
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 6	8/7/22 Off	8/8/22 0730-1600	8/9/22 0730-1600	8/10/22 0730-1600	8/11/22 0730-1600	8/12/22 0730-1600	8/13/22 Off

There is a time and attendance platform called VATAS – you will be expected to complete a training module so you can enter your leave requests. This is: VA Time & Attendance System (VATAS)- Employees #VA 3129973.

Program Evaluation

One of your responsibilities as a program participant is to provide feedback. We ask for your feedback through completion of evaluations and survey tools. This feedback data provides a rich source of information for determining the effectiveness of our program in achieving outcomes and meeting goals.

In addition to completing these formal tools, you are encouraged to share your impressions of the program **at any time**, through conversations with the nursing leadership, your preceptor, or the Program Director/and or Program Coordinator.

Program evaluation information is collected for the purpose of assessing developmental progress, to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning experiences provided, and to provide evidence that the program is meeting its intended purpose and goals. The following pages provide samples of the evaluation tools that you will be asked to complete during the program year. The individual's data may be discussed for the purpose of providing formative and summative evaluation of performance. However, cohort data are de-identified and aggregated prior to reporting as outcomes data for the purpose of program evaluation.

RN TTP Evaluation

RN TTPs are expected to adhere to the standards of performance identified in functional statement for the RN TTP. Each RN TTP will have their functional statement review on a one-to-one basis to maintain privacy. The RN TTP's performance will be assessed using these criteria as a basis for determination of satisfactory progress in the program. In addition to clinical performance as a member of the interdisciplinary team, your performance as an engaged learner will be evaluated. This evaluation is based upon your participation in classroom learning activities, completion of written assignments, and the completion and presentation of your evidence-based practice project.

Feedback is provided regularly throughout the program to guide your performance and to promote growth and development in your nursing practice. Any of the following may be used to evaluate your performance in this program:

1. Successful demonstration of unit-based competencies
2. Participation in progress review meetings
3. Attendance and participation in didactic and experiential learning sessions
4. Completion of written assignments
5. Completion and presentation of either an EBP paper, project, and poster or other activity resulting in the improvement of facility processes
6. Professional comportment on the clinical units and in the classroom
7. Adherence to VHA policies and protocols
8. Evaluation of RN TTP Performance

The program curriculum is designed to facilitate the development of professional competencies listed in the Resident Competency Assessment (RCA). These competencies have been identified by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education as essential for progression to the Competent Professional level of nursing role performance. It will be completed by the preceptor at 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months. While this tool is intended as a measure of program effectiveness, it may also serve as an indicator of program practice concerns that require further development.

RN TTPs are also expected to complete the required competencies for the clinical area in which they are working. RN TTPs are expected to maintain open communication with the Program Coordinator regarding concerns about completion of assignments and projects. It is our goal to contribute to your professional development through all the assignments.

At any time, you are welcome to provide feedback on the program. Our guide for program implementation is the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Standards

for Accreditation Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs. You can find a copy of this document at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/CCNE/PDF/CCNE-Entry-to-Practice-Residency-Standards-2021.pdf>. We do welcome any suggestions that would help us to meet these standards.

Curriculum

We utilize the *CCNE Standards for Accreditation of Entry-To-Practice Nurse Residency Programs* as a foundation for developing the curricular content of our program. Each curricular offering has specified learning objectives. Some of the learning objectives will be achieved in the classroom. Some will be achieved in your demonstration of clinical practice with your preceptor. Some will be achieved in clinical nursing rotation experiences. Some will be achieved through written assignments. Class attendance is tracked through sign-in rosters; submitted in-class assignments are retained in the program files. Submission of post-class assignments is documented by presence in the e-file folder. It is the RN TTPs responsibility to complete assignments by the due date for timely documentation. A minimum of 90% of the assignments must be completed and submitted to receive a Certificate of Completion for the program. Completed assignments may be used as elements of your portfolio.

REGISTERED NURSE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE PROGRAM

SOP 00-94

Department of Veterans Affairs

Albany-Stratton VAMC

New York 12208

Signatory Authority: Associate Director for Patient Care Services (ADPCS)

Responsible Owner: RN Transition to Practice Program Director and/or Coordinator

Service Line(s): Nursing Service

Effective Date: October 20th, 2022

Recertification Date: October 20th, 2027

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

To establish a standardized “Registered Nurse (RN) Transition-to-Practice Program for all levels of employed new graduate RNs (associate, diploma, baccalaureate, and master’s degree entry into nursing practice) in their first RN nursing role. This is a transition to practice program for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employed nurses with the goal to assist new RN graduates in the transition to full practice as competent RNs” (Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration, 2019).

2. **LEVEL/AUTHORITY:** Independent

3. DEFINITIONS

1. **First Licensed Registered Nurse (RN) Role.** The first licensed RN role is the first RN position the new RN accepts upon and within one year of graduation from nursing school and achievement of State licensure.

2. **New Graduate Registered Nurse.** A new graduate RN is a nurse with less than one-years’ experience who has completed an associate, diploma, baccalaureate, or master’s entry into nursing practice degree from an accredited school of nursing as their first RN degree (e.g., accredited by a U.S. Department of Education recognized nursing accrediting agency or accredited/approved by an authorized regulatory body (e.g., State board of nursing)).

3. **Registered Nurse (RN) Transition to Practice (TTP) Program.** The RN TTP Program is a comprehensive 12-month program designed to assist the novice RN in the transition from a beginner RN to full practice as a competent RN based on Patricia Benner's Theory of Novice to Expert. It is comprised of a standardized developmental curriculum with didactic and experiential components designed to provide the novice RN opportunities to perform the role, duties, and patient care activities and procedures that are performed by RNs.

4. **Registered Nurse Transition-to-Practice (RN TTP) Graduate Nurse.** A novice graduate RN (within one-year of graduating from an accredited college of nursing), employed by VHA, who is participating in the RN TTP Program (Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration, 2019).

5. **Mentor.** A mentor is an experienced RN who provides active support and encouragement throughout the duration of the RN TTP Program while serving as a professional role model.

6. **Preceptor.** A preceptor is an experienced RN who has completed preceptor training and is willing to serve as a clinical role model and resource for the new graduate RN.

7. **VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR).** The VALOR Program is designed to attract academically successful students of baccalaureate nursing programs to work at the VA as registered nurses.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

VA Medical Facility Director and all members of the VA Medical Facility

Leadership Team. The VA medical facility Director and all members of the VA medical facility leadership team (e.g., Quadrad, Pentad) are responsible for providing support, including fiscal support, to implement the RN TTP Residency Program successfully.

Associate Director for Patient Care Services or Chief Nurse Executive. The Associate Director for Patient Care Services (ADPCS) or Chief Nurse Executive (CNE) has VA medical facility oversight responsibility for:

(1) Ensuring the RN TTP Program is implemented with the support and resources necessary to provide an environment that facilitates the effective development and entry into practice of all eligible new RNs.

(2) Designating a RN TTP Program Director. The RN TTP Program Director must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in nursing and preferably a master's degree or higher

in nursing or education and preferably experience managing a RN TTP Program. The RN TTP Program Director must be academically and experientially qualified to accomplish the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes and able to provide effective leadership. NOTE: For CCNE accreditation, the RN TTP Program Director must have a graduate degree in nursing or a related field.

(3) Overseeing the following recommended Full-Time Employment Equivalent (FTEE) allocation depending on VA medical facility program status. NOTE: VA medical facilities, especially those with smaller numbers of residents, are encouraged to collaborate and share resources with other RN TTP Programs to achieve program objectives and efficiency.

(4) Ensuring that preceptors and mentors have the necessary training to fulfill their roles.

RN TTP Program Director and/or Program Coordinator. The RN TTP Program Director and/or Program Coordinator is responsible for:

(1) **Program Development and Implementation**. Overall planning and implementation, of the RN TTP Program to include:

(a) Establishing a 12-month program curriculum that is centered in management and delivery of quality and equitable care, professional role, and leadership development based on the CCNE Accreditation Standards as amended in 2021. Sample curriculum is available on the Office of Nursing Services Intranet at:
<http://vaww.va.gov/nursing/RNres.asp>.

NOTE: This is an internal VA Web site that is not available to the public.

(b) Collaborating with the Nurse Managers, Nurse Educators, Clinical Nurse Leaders, Clinical Nurse Specialists and preceptors on program development, implementation, progress, and evaluation.

(c) Determining the RN TTP Program start date in collaboration with nursing leadership.

(d) Facilitating the selection of RN TTPs in collaboration with nursing leadership.

Program Management and Oversight.

(a) Coordinating instructors/facilitators and classrooms for learning sessions, and confirmation/communication of dates/times.

- (b) Ensuring the program curriculum reflects evidence-based practice and identifies expected learning outcomes.
- (d) Directing, coordinating, and providing programmatic guidance for the new RNs, preceptors, and other RN TTP Program team members.
- (e) Communicating any concerns/issues that may arise to appropriate program stakeholders.
- (f) Working with the Nurse Recruiter and Human Resources to ensure proper coding of the residents.
- (g) Participating in monthly Office of Nursing Services (ONS) update/education calls.
- (h) Coordinating a graduation or recognition ceremony at completion of the RN TTP Program.

Program Evaluation.

- (a) Determining and implementing a process to demonstrate program effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction.
- (b) Ensuring the completion of evaluation forms from RN TTPs and preceptors, and others as appropriate. Evaluation forms to be completed by the RN TTP include the Casey-Fink, a residency progression assessment, and an end-of-program evaluation as determined by ONS. Preceptors and nurse managers are responsible for completing the required portions of the RN TTP progression assessment.
- (c) Providing an annual report by the end of each FY summarizing the data collected, program results, and any recommended program changes to the Associate Director for Patient Care Services.
- (d) Completing ONS reports and data requests by the deadlines set. NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list of Program Director responsibilities but highlights some of the key activities of the program director. Please see the RNTTP SharePoint site for functional statements of these roles (Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration, 2019).

Nurse Manager or Responsible Supervisor. The Nurse Manager or responsible supervisor (this will differ depending on the program structure) is responsible for ensuring:

- (1) Each RN TTP is assigned a preceptor.
- (2) Unit staffing methodology business plans incorporate the recommended protected FTEE time for the residents to fully participate in the RN TTP Program activities.
- (3) The RN TTP and the preceptor have adequate time to participate in and successfully complete the program. The unit time schedule for the resident and preceptor reflects the protected time.

Nurse Educator/Clinical Nurse Specialist/Clinical Nurse Leader. The Nurse Educator/Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)/Clinical Nurse Leader is responsible for:

- (1) Collaborating with the nurse manager in selection of the preceptor and mentor or supporting the RN TTP in mentor selection.
- (2) Supporting the RN TTP's professional development throughout the program.

Nurse Managers/Nurse Educators/Clinical Nurse Specialist/Clinical Nurse Leaders. Nurse Managers/Nurse Educators/CNS/Clinical Nurse Leaders are responsible for:

- (1) Determining a primary and secondary preceptor.
- (2) Overseeing daily progress of the RN TTP.
- (3) Evaluating performance of the RN TTP.
- (4) Adhering to VA medical facility staffing model as applied to RN TTPs and preceptors (particularly in the first 6 months of training).
- (5) Supporting the program with consistent attendance by the RN TTP.
- (6) Participating in a graduation/recognition ceremony for the RN TTP.

Nurse Recruiter. The Nurse Recruiter is responsible for:

- (1) Assuring all eligible new RNs have access to the RN TTP Program.
- (2) Recruiting for program participants at career fairs and nursing schools in the community.

The Transition to Practice RN. The RN TTP is responsible for:

- 1) Participation in classes and completing required assignments during the 12-month program.
- 2) Communicating learning needs to their preceptor, nurse manager, educator(s) and program coordinator.
- 3) Completing the competency validation process for competencies in the specified time frame.
- 4) Maintains current Basic Life Support certification from REdi RQI and completes all mandatory training in the required time frame.

5. PROCEDURES

Selection of Novice Graduate RNs: The novice graduate RN shall have less than one year of professional nursing experience and has passed the NCLEX exam and achieved state licensure in nursing prior to appointment in the RN TTP Program.

Graduate RN Training: The novice graduate RN must successfully complete a 12-month program curriculum that is centered in management and delivery of quality and equitable care, professional role, and leadership development based on the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Accreditation Standards as amended in 2021. The RN TTP Program intends to encourage the process of professional role socialization through the achievement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms, and roles associated with the practice of professional nursing (CCNE, 2021).

Preceptor Training: Minimum training for preceptors is 8 hours of didactic or virtual asynchronous training on precepting. Continuing education on precepting requirement is 8 hours every two years.

Role performance: The novice graduate RN must complete all course requirements and competencies to successfully transition to a competent practicing RN.

Evaluation: The evaluation of the novice graduate RN will occur at multiple levels. The novice graduate RN, preceptor, nurse manager and TTP Program coordinator will discuss the novice graduate's progress at regular intervals and address the goals and any concerns to guide the novice graduate RN in achieving required competencies. The novice graduate RN will complete a demographic data survey at month 1, the Casey-Fink Survey at the required intervals: 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months, the resident competency self-assessment at month 1, as well as the end of program

evaluation (EPE). The assigned preceptor or evaluator will complete the resident competency assessment at the required intervals: 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months. See Figure 1 below adapted from the Veteran Health Administration Office of Nursing Services RN Transition-to-Practice Residency Program Survey Guide, 2021.

Figure 1: Adapted RNTTP Evaluation Flow Map

6. Recruitment.

The Nurse Recruiter is essential in assuring all eligible novice graduate RNs have access to the RN TTP Program and for collaborating with the RN TTP Director and/or Coordinator to ensure a robust recruiting program at career fairs and nursing schools in the community. Potential sources for RN TTP candidates include:

- (a) VALOR students
- (b) SNTs
- (c) VANEER RN graduates
- (d) Colleges of Nursing
- (e) USAJOBS

The RN TTP candidate may begin the application process prior to licensure BUT must be fully licensed prior to entry on duty (EOD).

7. Handling Complaints.

- a. Complaints about the RN TTP will be forwarded to the program coordinator for resolution. Upon resolution, the program coordinator will provide a summary of the complaint to the Designated Learning Officer, Education.
- b. If the coordinator is unable to resolve the issue, the complaint will be forwarded to the Designated Learning Officer, Education for resolution. Unresolved issues will be addressed by the Associate Director of Patient Care Services or transferred to the arbitration process for the medical center.
- c. Nursing administration will be involved in information gathering and corrective action planning as appropriate.

d. The program coordinator will document the RN TTPs concerns on a VA Form 119, Report of Contact (ROC). Any additional correspondence regarding the issue will also be maintained along with the ROC in program files.

e. The program coordinator will maintain documentation related to each complaint. Complaint data will be aggregated, reviewed, and reported annually to the Designated Learning Officer, Education.

8. REFERENCES

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. (Amended 2021). Standards for accreditation of entry-to-practice nurse residency programs. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/CCNE/PDF/CCNE-Entry-to-Practice-Residency-Standards-2021.pdf>

Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (2019, April 26). VHA directive 1077: VHA Registered nurses (RN) transition to practice program. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/VHF328~1/AppData/Local/Temp/2/MicrosoftEdgeDownloads/b7e09800-98d6-47e4-82c1-5e3bf5048637/1077_D_2019-04-26.pdf

Veteran Health Administration Office of Nursing Services (2021, March). RN transition-to-practice residency program survey guide. Retrieved from <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VACOVHAONS/Workforce/RNResidency/Master%20Document%20List/All%20RNTTP%20Documents/OC%20RNTTP%20Survey%20Program%20Guide%209.1.2020.pdf>

9. REVIEW

This SOP will be reviewed upon changes to the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation standards governing Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs.

10. RECERTIFICATION

This SOP is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of October 2027– 5 years from effective date. This policy will continue to serve as local policy until it is recertified or rescinded. In the event of contradiction with national policy, the national policy supersedes and controls.

RN TTP Leave Approval

RN TTPs are assigned to the Education department until they transfer to their assigned home unit. The supervisor of record is the RN TTP Program Coordinator. However, you will also be accountable and responsible to the unit nursing leadership on any clinical unit where you are assigned.

The Designated Learning Officer and/or the RN TTP Program Coordinator is responsible for approving Sick Leave and Annual Leave. For Sick Leave to be approved, the appropriate procedure must be followed. If you are too ill to report for work, **you must call the Nursing Supervisor to report the illness.** Be sure to tell the supervisor where you were assigned to work, and that your supervisor of record is Patricia Muster and/or Catherine Lester in Education. The shift that you return to work, you must enter the request for sick leave into VATAS. **If you do not enter the request in a timely manner, you may not receive payment for the hours missed.**

If you would like to schedule Annual Leave, you must request it in advance to Catherine Lester via email (Catherine.lester@va.gov) and place your request in the VATAS system. Ms. Lester will check to make sure that you are not scheduled to attend a required class prior to approval, so please plan accordingly. **If you do not obtain advance approval, and you do not report for work, you will be considered absent without leave (AWOL), which is a disciplinary issue.**

AL is accrued at a rate of **8 hours per pay period**, and SL is accrued at a rate of **4 hours per pay period**. Every effort is made to provide you with an accurate accounting of your available leave hours. **However, if an error is made on your Leave and Earnings Statement, you are still only permitted the stated number of leave hours. Do not use leave hours for which you are not eligible, as these would have to be repaid.**

My Resources

Assigned Clinical Unit_____

My Preceptor_____

My Clinical Nurse Manager_____

My Clinical Assistant Nurse Manager_____

My Clinical Nurse Educator_____

Program Coordinator: Catherine M. Lester, MSN, RN CNEcl-- 518-776-8045 Office C-614-4

Designated Learning Officer: Patricia F. Muster MSN, RN, NPD-BC-- 518-626-5544

Successful Completion of the Program

Successful completion of the RN TTP Program requires several elements.

1. Active participation in scheduled learning experiences (minimum 90%)
2. Completion of Evidence Based Practice Paper, Project, and Poster, and Presentation of findings or process improvement project.
3. Completion of Scheduled Learning Seminars and experiential learning opportunities (90%)
4. Completion of Professional Portfolio.
5. Completion of all written assignments.
6. Satisfactory clinical performance.
7. Satisfactory interpersonal skills.
8. Special circumstances which prevent program completion:

The expected outcome for a RN TTP is to develop the competencies of a competent professional nurse, which includes the delivery of nursing care to Veteran patients in the nursing units where they are placed. The RN TTP is expected to fully participate in the learning activities and demonstrate skills, through delivery of direct nursing care in the acute care setting or long-term care setting.

Direct care in the acute and long-term nursing care units involves physical exertion defined in the position description. Included in the physical exertion level expected are:

Behavioral Health and Medical-Surgical Nursing Physical Requirements:

This position requires visual acuity, keen hearing, clear distinctive speech, and manual dexterity. This position requires potentially long periods of continued, standing and sitting. The incumbent must be a mature, flexible, sensible individual capable of working effectively in stressful situations, able to shift priorities based on patient needs. Must complete any applicable annual Employee Health requirements, such as annual TB screening or testing, as a condition of employment.

Additionally, the RN TTP is responsible for maintaining certification as a BLS provider through REdi RQI with the expectation to deliver effective CPR when needed. When the RN TTP is no longer able to meet these minimal physical requirements, due to any reasons, there is a significant impairment in the ability to complete the education program. Reasonable accommodations may be made, at the discretion of the program director and/or coordinator with advisement of the DLO for Education and the ADPCS. Reasonable accommodations are those which may be made on a temporary or permanent basis and will facilitate full participation in all scheduled learning activities. The curriculum may not be altered to accommodate the limitations of the participant.

When the RN TTP is unable to participate fully in the educational curriculum (which includes the clinical practice component), the RN TTP resident must notify the Program

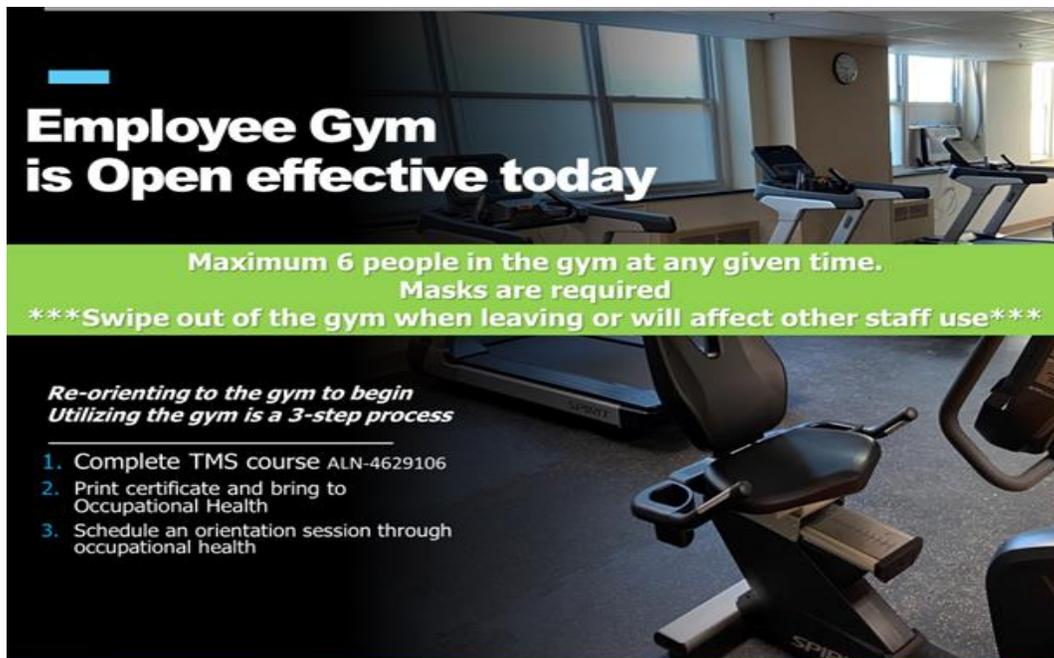
Director and/or coordinator in writing about the physical limitations and expected time period of limitation. A formal meeting will be scheduled to discuss opportunities for reasonable accommodations, and the impact on successful program completion. The RN TTP must follow staff guidelines and provide the supporting medical documentation. A written plan will be developed and agreed upon by the RN TTP, the Program Director and/or coordinator, and DLO of Education to identify remedial actions to be taken and which, if any, reasonable accommodations will be required for successful program completion. At this time, the Program Director and/or coordinator, DLO Education and the ADPCS will determine which learning experiences can be excused and still permit successful program completion. If the action plan and/or reasonable accommodations does not lead to successful completion, the RN TTP will be notified in writing of their failure to complete the curriculum and discharged from the program. Once this determination is made, the RN TTP position will end.

Year of the Healthy Nurse

Each year, the American Nurses Association selects a theme to set the tone for the coming year. 2017 was designated as the Year of the Healthy Nurse. Nurses across the nation are challenged to seek ways of establishing or sustaining healthy lifestyles in order to be prepared for caring for their patients, their families, and making the optimum contribution to the profession.

Throughout the coming year, you must find ways of maintaining your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Take time to care for yourself. Here are a few tips you may find helpful in developing a healthy nursing practice:

- Visit the Employee Wellness SharePoint page, and read monthly topics on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/EWH-Resources.asp>
- Join the fitness center here at the Albany Stratton VAMC:



- Ask your preceptor or leadership team about the protocol for scheduling breaks each shift. For an 8-hour shift, you are entitled to one 30-minute meal break and two 15-minute rest breaks. For a 12-hour shift, you are entitled to one 30-minute meal break and three 15-minute rest breaks. Your breaks are important opportunities to refuel, refresh, and renew.
- Get plenty of sleep, eat a balanced diet, and take time to laugh and enjoy the things in life that you find meaningful.

- Enjoy reading the VA's Employee Health & Well-Being: HealthyLife Newsletter at: <http://vaww.publichealth.va.gov/employeehealth/wellness/healthylife-newsletter.asp>

Learning Goals

This is an example of a learning goals planning guide. Be prepared to discuss your goals, and which ones you've met, when you have an opportunity to meet with your preceptor, clinical nurse educator, nurse manager, or program director/coordinator. We are committed to helping you meet your learning goals.

My goal(s) for the week is/are to:	Identify (3) steps to reach each of the goals listed.	Goal Met, Not Met, Ongoing (please indicate)	Reviewed by Preceptor: (Preceptor signature)
Weekly Goal 1:	1. 2. 3.		
Weekly Goal 2:	1. 2. 3.		
Weekly Goal 3:	1. 2. 3.		

Clinical Nurse Educator: _____

ANM/NM Review: _____

Program Director Review: _____

Clinical Documentation

As a new RN TTP, you are supervised by your clinical preceptor. Make sure to add your preceptor and the RN TTP Program Coordinator as a co-signor to all your notes. All documentation will be co-signed by your preceptor until the RN TTP Program Coordinator has determined in collaboration with your preceptor and the unit nursing leadership that you are ready to practice independently.

It is important that documentation occurs as close to the time of assessment as possible. Delays in documentation undermines patient safety. Sally Austin provides an excellent example of why this is crucial (2022).

Let's say you just gave your patient pain medication, and the charge nurse tells you to take your lunch break. You ask a colleague to monitor your patient while you're on break. You advise her that the patient is stable, but you leave without documenting your administration of the medication. While you're at lunch, the patient asks your colleague for something for the pain. Checking the EMR, your colleague sees no documentation of the drug dose you administered before leaving and administers an additional dose of opioid. This error could have been avoided had you documented the pain medication administration and informed your colleague.

Austin, S. (2011). Stay out of court with proper documentation. *Nursing2022*, 42(4). 24-29. Retrieved September 16, 2022 from

https://journals.lww.com/nursing/Fulltext/2011/04000/Stay_out_of_court_with_proper_documentation.11.aspx

****Make sure to sign ALL notes each day before you leave****

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

I acknowledge receipt of the Participant Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and rules contained in it.

Participant: _____

Date: _____

RN TTP Program Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

******A scanned signed copy of this document page will be retained by the RN TTP Program Coordinator******